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SENSORY ANALYSIS OF OLIVE OIL

METHOD FOR THE

**ORGANOLEPTIC ASSESSMENT
OF VIRGIN OLIVE OIL**

4. SPECIFIC VOCABULARY FOR VIRGIN OLIVE OIL

4.1. Negative attributes

**Fusty/
muddy**

sediment Characteristic flavour of oil obtained from olives piled or stored in such conditions as to have undergone an advanced stage of anaerobic fermentation, or of oil which has been left in contact with the sediment that settles in underground tanks and vats and which has also undergone a process of anaerobic fermentation.

**Musty-
humid**

Characteristic flavour of oils obtained from fruit in which large numbers of fungi and yeasts have developed as a result of its being stored in humid conditions for several days.

Winey-vinegary Acid-sour Characteristic flavour of certain oils reminiscent of wine or vinegar. This flavour is mainly due to a process of aerobic fermentation in the olives or in olive paste left on pressing mats which have not been properly cleaned and leads to the formation of acetic acid, ethyl acetate and ethanol.

Metallic Flavour that is reminiscent of metals. It is characteristic of oil which has been in prolonged contact with metallic surfaces during crushing, mixing, pressing or storage.

Rancid Flavour of oils which have undergone an intense process of oxidation.

4.2. Other negative attributes

Heated or burnt Characteristic flavour of oils caused by excessive and/or prolonged heating during processing, particularly when the paste is thermally mixed, if this is done under unsuitable thermal conditions.

Hay-wood Characteristic flavour of certain oils produced from olives that have dried out.

Rough Thick, pasty mouthfeel sensation produced by certain old oils.

Greasy Flavour of oil reminiscent of that of diesel oil, grease or mineral oil.

Vegetable Water Flavour acquired by the oil as a result of prolonged contact with vegetable water which has undergone fermentation processes.

Brine Flavour of oil extracted from olives which have been preserved in brine.

Esparto Characteristic flavour of oil obtained from olives pressed in new esparto mats. The flavour may differ depending on whether the mats are made of green esparto or dried esparto.

Earthy Flavour of oil obtained from olives which have been collected with earth or mud on them and not washed.

Grubby Flavour of oil obtained from olives which have been heavily attacked by the grubs of the olive fly (*Bactrocera oleae*).

Cucumber Flavour produced when an oil is hermetically packed for too long, particularly in tin containers, and which is attributed to the formation of 2,6 nonadienal.

Wet wood Characteristic flavour of oils extracted from olives which have been injured by frost while on the tree.

4.3. Positive attributes

- Fruity** Set of olfactory sensations characteristic of the oil which depends on the variety and comes from sound, fresh olives, either ripe or unripe. It is perceived directly and/or through the back of the nose.
- Bitter** Characteristic primary taste of oil obtained from green olives or olives turning colour. It is perceived in the circumvallate papillae on the “V” region of the tongue.
- Pungent** Biting tactile sensation characteristic of oils produced at the start of the crop year, primarily from olives that are still unripe. It can be perceived throughout the whole of the mouth cavity, particularly in the throat.

4.4. OPTIONAL TERMINOLOGY FOR LABELLING PURPOSES

Upon request, the panel leader may certify that the oils which have been assessed comply with the definitions and ranges corresponding to the following adjectives according to the intensity and perception of the attributes.

Positive attributes (fruity, bitter and pungent): According to the intensity of perception:

- *Intense*, when the median of the fruitiness is more than 6;
- *Medium*, when the median of the fruitiness is between 3 and 6;
- *Light*, when the median of the fruitiness is less than 3.

- Fruity** Set of olfactory sensations characteristic of the oil which depends on the variety of olive and comes from sound, fresh olives in which neither green nor ripe fruitiness predominates. It is perceived directly and/or through the back of the nose.
- Greenly fruity** Set of olfactory sensations characteristic of the oil which is reminiscent of green fruit, depends on the variety of olive and comes from green, sound, fresh olives. It is perceived directly and/or through the back of the nose.
- Ripely fruity** Set of olfactory sensations characteristic of the oil which is reminiscent of ripe fruit, depends on the variety of olive and comes from sound, fresh olives, green or ripe. It is perceived directly and/or through the back of the nose.
- Well balanced** Oil which does not display a lack of balance, by which is meant the olfactory–gustatory and tactile sensation where the median of the bitter and/or pungent attributes is two points higher than the median of the fruitiness.
- Mild oil** Oil for which the median of the bitter and pungent attributes is 2 or less.